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## Book Notices.

### ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN EPISTOLARY LITERATURE.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Johnston, in *The Epistolary Literature of the Assyrians and Babylonians*, has made a contribution to the study of the Letter Literature. This dissertation was first printed in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 125-75, and Vol. XIX, pp. 41-96. It has been reprinted in separate form, with the retention of the original pagination.

The author first gives us a "General Introduction to the Letter Literature," with a very fair estimate of the work which has already been done by scholars, and also of what remains to be done. In this introduction notice is taken of the studies of George Smith, Pinches, Fox Talbot, Strassmaier, S. A. Smith, Delitzsch, R. F. Harper, Berry, and others. To Delitzsch is given the credit of doing the first really scientific work in his articles in the *Beiträge zur Assyriologie* (1889-91). The student is referred to Dr. Berry's dissertation, *The Letters of the R<sup>m</sup> 2. Collection*, HEBRAICA, Vol. XI, pp. 174-202, for a complete bibliography. Although the term "Epistolary" or "Letter Literature" refers, by general consent, to the Letters of the period of the Sargonides, and it is in this sense used in this dissertation, the author does well to give a short account of the Tel el-Amarna tablets—about four hundred in number—discovered in the winter of 1887-8. In addition to this introduction, we have in Part I a transliteration and translation, with special historical introductions, of the following Letters: Bel-ibni, K. 524 (H. 282), K. 13 (H. 281), K. 10 (H. 280); Nabû-ušabši, K. 528 (H. 269), K. 79 (H. 266); Sin-tabni-ušur, K. 824 (H. 290); Ša-Ašur-dubbu, K. 469 (H. 138); Nabû-šum-iddina, K. 629 (H. 65), K. 547 (H. 62); Išdî-Nabû, K. 589 (H. 187); Nabû'a, K. 551 (H. 142); Balasî and Nabû-ahe-erba, K. 565 (H. 77); Arad-Ea, K. 1024 (H. 28); Arad-Nanâ, S. 1064 (H. 392), K. 519 (H. 108); Ištar-dûri, K. 504 (H. 157); Bel-Ikîša and Babilâ, K. 660 (H. 66); Ṭab-šil-Ešara,<sup>2</sup> K. 515 (H. 89); Sarâ'a, K. 1274 (H. 220); Bel-upâk, K. 1239 (H. 219)—twenty in all.

In Part II we have a few pages of notes, textual, grammatical, and lexicographical, a glossary, an "Index of Proper Names," three tables: (1) "The Sargonide Kings of Assyria;" (2) "The Royal Family of Elam," contemporary with Esarhaddon and Sardanapallus; (3) "The Chaldean Kings of Bitiakîn;" and a bibliography.

<sup>1</sup> THE EPISTOLARY LITERATURE OF THE ASSYRIANS AND BABYLONIANS. A Dissertation presented to the Board of University Studies of the Johns Hopkins University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (1894) by Christopher Johnston. Baltimore, 1898. 51+56 pp.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. 8402, a Letter from this writer. Cf. above, p. 131.

I should like to make the following general observations on this work: (1) that the methods employed are strictly scientific; (2) that the translations are done into good, intelligent English—an unusual thing in such translations; (3) that the author's references to those who have preceded him, as well as to those who are working in this field at the present time, are always courteous and fair; and (4) that it is a distinct contribution to the study of the Letter Literature.

Dr. Johnston has made several corrections in the texts of the Letters published. I am inclined to think that my copy of K. 469, rv. 13 (H. 138), is correct, viz.: u-ka-ip-ni (uḫā'ip-ni), without *u*. Delitzsch's rule does not always hold—especially in the Letters. In the glossary it would have been useful to students if the author had added forms from the other Letters, as in the cases of bādu, ḥannû, kamāsu, etc.

The Letter Literature is difficult and important. There is room for many workers, who may expect to obtain good results in customs, history, and the lexicon. It is to be hoped that Dr. Johnston will continue his studies in these lines.

ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER.

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#### KING'S FIRST STEPS IN ASSYRIAN.<sup>1</sup>

King's *First Steps in Assyrian* is a manual, a method. It is always well to judge a book from the author's standpoint, and hence I quote from the preface: "The aim of the present work is to furnish the beginner with all the materials which he will require in his earliest studies of the Assyrian language and the cuneiform inscriptions. It contains a sketch of the most useful facts concerning the cuneiform system of writing, and an outline of the principles of Assyrian grammar; a list of the more common signs and ideograms; a series of texts and extracts, printed in the Assyrian cuneiform character with interlinear transliteration and translation, ranging in date from about B. C. 2250 to B. C. 260; and a full vocabulary to all the texts printed in the book."

The author has selected a great variety of texts. All branches of the Babylonian and Assyrian literature are represented. The Babylonian texts are printed in the Assyrian (Ninevite) characters. Great care has also been exercised in choosing texts which are of historical value.

The method of transliteration is the one in common use in America and on the continent—differing from that of Sayce. The translation is word for word, and the vocabulary is complete, the words being arranged in alphabetical order, after the style of Arnolt's *Dictionary*, and by roots, after Delitzsch, with cross references.

For beginners, and especially for those who cannot have the instruction of a teacher, this method is by far the most complete and satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> FIRST STEPS IN ASSYRIAN. A Book for Beginners, being a Series of Historical, Mythological, Religious, Magical, Epistolary and other Texts printed in Cuneiform Characters with Interlinear Transliteration and Translation, and a Sketch of Assyrian Grammar, Sign-List and Vocabulary. By L. W. King, M.A., Assistant in the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1898. cxxxix + 399 pp.; large 8vo. 15s.